

## Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in Council Chambers on Tuesday, February 20, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 6:31 pm.

Present: Mayor Todd J. Nock  
First Vice President: Esther Troast  
Council Members: R. Scott Holland,  
Diane Downing and Monda Marsh  
City Manager: John Barkley  
City Attorney: Andrew Illuminati  
City Clerk: Michelle Beckett-El Soloh

### Pledge of Allegiance, Prayer by Councilmember Troast and Call to Order

### Approval of Minutes from Meeting of January 12, 2024

Motion to approve minutes as written for January 12, 2024 (Holland, Troast passed)

Acclamation: Troast-aye, Holland-aye, Marsh-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed, motion carried

### Review and Approval Current Bill List

Motion to approve current bill list (Troast, Downing passed)

Acclamation: Troast-aye, Holland-aye, Marsh-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed, motion carried

### Appointment & Swear in Board of Election Supervisor

Motion to table until next meeting on March 4, 2024 (Troast, Marsh passed)

Acclamation: Troast-aye, Holland-aye, Marsh-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed, motion carried

### Student and Teacher Recognition for Pocomoke City Christmas Card Design

Councilmember Troast said about five years ago the city was struggling for a Christmas card. The Mayor & Council came up with a plan to contact the schools and see if the Art program could be of assistance. Each year, the city does a contest and has the students design a card that showcases the local classes talent. She feels like each year, the cards get better and better. The cards are sent state-wide, even to the governor's office. There are approximately 250 sent each year. This year, 7<sup>th</sup> grader, Aubrey Bernal from Ms. Rachel Wisniewski's class was the Christmas card design contest winner.

### Boys & Girls Club Update

Mark and Anna Piccirilli are both with Boys & Girls Clubs of Metropolitan Baltimore (BGCMB) in Maryland. They would like to give an update regarding local Boys & Girls Club locations. BGCMD comprises 90 Boys & Girls Clubs spread across 19 counties and Baltimore City. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Maryland (BGCMD) is a network of nine independent Boys & Girls Club organizations across the state. These local Clubs play a crucial role in meeting the unique needs of families in their respective communities. BGCMD aims to connect communities and serve the children of Maryland, especially those who need support the most. The goal is to reach 45,000 children across all jurisdictions. They are currently located in the High Schools and have 75 registered participants after school. The programs are completely free of charge and promote guidance, supervision, leadership

and healthy lifestyle choices for these youth. There will be a fundraiser coming up. The new location will be in Cambridge, MD. They want to construct a new building in Pocomoke City. There is \$450,000 in funds to use across Maryland. There is a 3,000 sq. ft. building going up in Salisbury, MD. There are grants that will be available and they are available to help communities write grants for funding. Mark Thompson is the Community Liaison for the elementary school. He would like to see the elementary kids do a Christmas card. He agrees that the community is in need of a community center. The area is in crisis of something to do after school to keep them safe and off the streets and be a positive role model. The only thing in the area is the YMCA and that is not accessible to everyone. If he can do anything, please let him know.

Discuss Memorandum of Understanding for DNR Flood Study

City Manager, John Barkley, said the city has received a grant opportunity for a study from DNR for flood evaluation and mitigation. Maryland faces the challenge of rising sea levels, leading to more frequent floods and higher storm surges along its coast. The state has been proactive in mapping future coastal changes to combat sea level rise, stormwater drainage, bank stabilization, erosion control and flood impacts. Maryland's DNR coordinates a state mapping project to identify areas that could become flooded or serve as beneficial wetlands in the future. This is a reimbursable grant for \$50,000 and it would provide the city to work with a contractor and professional engineering. This is a good way to receive solid, tangible recommendations for project as well as serve as a good way to obtain more funding in the future.

Introduce Resolution No. 591, Council Approval to Accept MD Dept. of Health Grant Funds

Mayor Nock read:

**Resolution No. 591**

**Council Approval to Accept MD Dept. of Health Grant Funds  
Pocomoke City, Maryland**

Public Hearing & Adopt Ordinance No. 463, Chapter 186, Rental Property Registration, 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading

Mayor Nock read:

**Ordinance No. 463**

**Chapter 186, Rental Property Registration  
Pocomoke City, Maryland**

The Public Hearing was opened. There were no comments or objections from the public. Public Hearing closed.

Motion to adopt Ordinance No. 463, Chapter 186, Rental Property Registration (Holland, Troast passed

Acclamation: Troast-aye, Holland-aye, Marsh-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed, motion carried

Public Hearing & Adopt Resolution No. 590, Council Approval to Accept CDBG Grant Funds, 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading

Mayor Nock read:

**Resolution No. 590**

**Council Approval to Accept CDBG Grant Funds  
Pocomoke City, Maryland**

The Public Hearing was opened. There were no comments or objections from the public. Public Hearing closed.



Motion to adopt Resolution No. 590, Council Approval to Accept CDBG Grant Funds (Holland, Troast passed)

Acclamation: Troast-aye, Holland-aye, Marsh-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed, motion carried

#### Discuss Purchase of Vehicles for Public Works

The City Manager, John Barkley, said he would like to bring to the mayor and Council's attention the loss of another Public Works vehicle. It lost its transmission. Pictures are also provided. Four out of the ten Public Works vehicles are running. The city would like the Council to consider this as an emergency purchase of a new truck using ARPA funds, which is a federally authorized purchase, not to exceed \$60,000. Mayor Nock said he had a chance to review the photos and they were atrocious. The city needs to review the purchase of several new vehicles for a few departments. Councilmember Troast said they have been aware of the need to purchase new vehicles for a while now. It also helps keep departments competitive. She is recommending to other Councilmembers to approve this expenditure for Public Works and budget this fiscal year for new vehicles after reviewing the existing fleet.

Motion to approve the emergency purchase, not to exceed \$60,000 using ARPA funds, for a new vehicle for the Public Works Department (Troast, Downing passed)

Acclamation: Troast-aye, Holland-aye, Marsh-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed, motion carried

#### Comments from Council

Councilmember Holland wanted to remind everyone of the comedy show at Marva Theater. Tickets are available online. Purchase of the tickets will help make up the loss while they had to shut down.

Councilmember Marsh hopes everyone had a happy Valentine's Day and recognize our "Cupid". He was seen skipping through town. When she saw the pictures, she chuckled several times. She also recognized Karah for following him and taking pictures.

Councilmember Troast said she also had a chance to see "Cupid" in the flower shop. It made her day.

#### Comments from the Mayor

Mayor Nock thanked the employee who dressed up a "Cupid". He said he is a good sport. We can dress him up as anything and he does it to the best of his ability. It was hilarious and brought a lot of joy to his heart. He also thanked Karah. He received an email last week about the neighborhood watch. He said that he will no longer be facilitating it. Anyone can go to the safety meeting and bring ideas to the Chief of Police. He thanked the gentleman for reaching out with his concern and ideas. There were people who made faces when he said he did not have an interest in facilitating the neighborhood watch. After it was started, it was handed off to the citizens and another Councilmember since then it has gone to nonexistent. He understands what he has on his plate right now and one thing at everyone needs to learn how to do is say no when you are too busy to commit so it can be picked up by someone else who does have time. He still supports it but cannot spearhead it.

#### Comments from City Manager

Employee reports will now be posted on the city website. That will help citizens find out what's going on and what's on the City Manager's mind and concerns of the Mayor & Council. Tonight, there is a



Work Session on The Cannabis Legislation and setting up an historic district. He appreciates the feedback and assistance from Mayor & Council. The Water Tower Mixer project has reached 82% completion. That will work well with the CIPP Lining project for water quality. The new Lift Stations have been certified electrically and are operational so that project is nearing completion. The city drafted a letter to the Worcester County Commissioners for restricted and unrestricted grant funds. One thing that will benefit is the Log Cabin and replacing and updating the electrical system. He and the mayor will be going to the Worcester County budget meeting on March 5, 2024. We did receive a Tax Yield Rate Certification from Maryland Department of Assessment and Taxation and that will be used for budgeting for FY25. The Cricket Center is here and will be opening in April. They provide a dearly needed service in this area at 500 Market St. of child efficacy.

#### Comments from Audience

Particia Martin, she had an incident in Tractor Supply parking lot. She was putting on her seat belt and heard someone blowing the horn. When she pulled out of the parking lot the car shot around her and pulled in front of her. She wrote down the tag number and turned it in to the Sherriff's office. Nothing was done. She heard that the rental properties in town is a most 60%. She believes that a landlord should be held liable for a tenant's actions. Mayor Nock said absolutely not. Another adult cannot be held liable for another adult's actions. Ms. Martin did not agree.

Sara Chapman, she was voted to be the Great Pocomoke Fair manager this year. She already has spoken with EMS and the Fire Marshall but needs to know what else to do. She has already confirmed many events such as rides, concerts, rodeo, horse rides, racing, events for kids. She realizes it is the same weekend as the county fair. The Mayor said make sure to turn in a business plan draft of the events and the City Clerk is a liaison to the Fair. Mrs. Chapman just wants to make sure that she has all bases covered. Councilmember Holland and Troast said they are available if needed.

CL Marshall said recreation is very important to the city. He was pleased to hear the Boys and Girls Club plans. He has some experience with the Boys and girls Club in North Carolina. He was pleased to see the upgrades to the basketball courts and thanked the County Commissioners for their vision and will serve the community for years to come and invites everyone to join him at the grand-opening. He would like to address jobs. It is vitally important to keep jobs in our area. There is a bill that threatens to make jobs vacate our area. House Bill No. 935 and Senate Bill No. 784 will place a 11% excise tax on goods produced in Maryland. That will cause a lot of jobs to move. He will be there to testify against it. Mayor Nock said there have been emails that have circulated around. He has not received one. if the State expects them to know what's going on, like citizens expect the Council to inform the public, they have to be better at communicating. Only Councilmember Downing received an email from the State. Every Councilmember should have received an email whether they were for or against the bill. Mayor Nock thanked Mr. Marshall for bringing it up.

Chief Hancock reminded everyone about the Community Safety Meeting coming up on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center. The Police Department will also start posting monthly stats and how someone can anonymously contact the department.

Nola Tullar, she said when looking at the Mayor's message online, he mentioned the Costen House but yet the city didn't give any funding. Is the city promoting it in one way but not the other? The Mayor said it is appropriate for him to mention locations but places have to be willing to support themselves too. When the Sturgis One Room School House needed funds, Kim Jones took over and

raised money. Last year, no communication was received so it was not considered at all. Several places did not receive funding last year because the budget was cut. She would like to see the city fund our destinations if it can.

Motion to table Work Session for Cannabis Legislation to see what happens with the new State legislation. The City Attorney said the moratorium that the council set will expire sooner than later. It is currently, more or less, in line with the State requirements. The State is mostly addressing the distances from child care and school that was previously set.

Motion to postpone the Work Session for Cannabis Legislation until Monday night (Marsh, Holland passed)

Acclamation: Troast-aye, Holland-aye, Marsh-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed, motion carried

Motion to adjourn meeting (Marsh, Troast passed)

Acclamation: Troast-aye, Holland-aye, Marsh-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed, motion carried

Approved: Michelle Beckett-El Soloh  
City Clerk